

# **Expression of interest for mentor role in the Early Years COVID-19 Recovery: Experts and Mentors Programme – deadline noon 1st July 2022.**

## **Context**

The earliest years are the most crucial point of child development and attending early education lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children’s social and emotional development.

Evidence tells us that the quality of education and care in early years has the biggest impact on children’s outcomes within a childcare setting. As such, we have designed a COVID-19 recovery programme for early years focused on supporting practitioners and leaders, who are key to addressing the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children.

The Department of Education (DfE) Early Years COVID-19 Recovery: Experts and Mentors programme will support early years practitioners, leaders and whole-settings. Experts and mentors will provide bespoke support face-to-face and virtually to help meet individual settings’ needs and prorities. The offer to settings will include leadership support, coaching for leaders, mentoring for practitioners and whole-setting support depending on needs.

The Experts and Mentors pilot programme is taking place in two Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC) regions, Lancashire and West Yorkshire and the North of England, from April – July 2022. The application process for the pilot programme is now closed, and successful candidates are currently providing support to settings.

## **Opportunities now open**

We are currently looking for experienced early years professionals to become experts and mentors in specific locations.

In February 2022, we opened applications for candidates to take part in the full programme roll-out, commencing on a national scale, in **September 2022** (coveringacademic years 2022/23 and 2023/24). The initial deadline for these applications was the end of March 2022.

We are now re-opening applications for candidates to take part in the full programme roll-out, in specific locations, to cover areas where we require further recruitment.

Please see the list of local authority areas below, where we require **mentors:**

* London (range of boroughs)
* South East (Kent, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Medway, Southend, Surrey. A small number of mentors may also be required in other areas of the South East)
* South West (Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire. A small number of mentors may also be required in other areas of the South West.)
* West Midlands (Sandwell, Solihull, Herefordshire, Warwickshire. A small number of mentors may also be required in other areas of the West Midlands)

**Please note**, in some cases, we may only require one person to fulfil the role of mentor in a local authority area. In submitting your application, please consider whether you would be willing to support some of the surrounding areas. The mentor role is virtual, and does not require travel to settings.

## **Different roles within the programme**

* The role of the ‘expert’ will be to provide face-to-face support to the setting leader, with the main focus of supporting children to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and others.
* The role of the ‘mentor’ will be to provide remote support to practitioners, as they complete a new online child development training package, as well as providing more general support focusing on improving practice and curriculum to support children following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
* The role of the ‘area lead’ will be to act as a first point of contact to experts and mentors in your region. Experts and mentors may require this support for various reasons, for example when delivering a difficult message or where practitioners or leaders are not engaging fully with the programme. Area leads will also provide face-to-face support to a setting leader, with the main focus of supporting children to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Please note**, applications for the role of Area Lead have been filled.

## **Mentor - Responsibilities and experience**

We are looking for applicants with at least three years’ experience and who are currently working in an early years setting that is Ofsted rated ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ (or equivalent independent school inspection rating). You may still apply for this programme if your setting is yet to be inspected. This includes those working in schools, nursery schools, a **private, voluntary or independent** (PVI) nursery or other early years settings.

Please note, at this time, childminders are not eligible to apply for this programme. More information on how childminders can get involved in the programme will be announced in due course.

We will also accept applications from staff currently working in early years roles within local authorities (LAs), universities, or similar organisations who deliver Child Development and/or early years teacher training qualifications.

Given the focus of this programme is on providing peer-to-peer and setting-to-setting support, we intend to focus first on applications from people currently working within early years settings, and will then consider applications from LAs and universities.

Applicants for all roles must have a Level 6 or above early years qualification, and have agreement from the setting manager/owner/head teacher to take part in the project.

Mentors should be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of child development and have a clear understanding of the revised [Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework 2021](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf) and its application in a variety of settings, including private, voluntary or independent (PVI) nursery settings.

The mentor role will be online/virtual, so we are looking for people who can build relationships quickly and easily using remote technology, such as Microsoft Teams. Experience of coaching is desirable and we would particularly welcome applications from those with experience of supporting others in the early years sector.

**As a mentor, you may be responsible for:**

* Supporting practitioners to identify strengths and weaknesses within their practice and providing guidance to enable improvements in their practice​
* Supporting practitioners through our new online child development training
* Supporting practitioners to identify children most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including those with significant time out of the setting and advising how they can be best supported​
* Supporting practitioners with implementation of the revised EYFS, including reducing unnecessary tracking and paperwork and having meaningful assessment conversations​
* Providing advice for supporting children with Special Educational needs and Disabilities (SEND)​
* Providing advice for supporting children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)​
* Supporting practitioners to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged children and others. ​
* Supporting practitioners to build strong relationships with parents.

## **Time required for the role**

* For the role of mentor, you must be available to provide 6 hours of support, per early years setting. Each mentor is expected to support 4 early years settings, per term. This equates to around 4 hours per fortnight, per term.
* Mentorship will be delivered virtually, or by phone, and the hours can be organised to suit the mentor and mentee. For example, by having fortnightly hourly calls or weekly 30 minutes video-calls. There is no requirement to deliver mentoring face-to-face.
* You may also be required to participate in a short video-call interview during the assessment process.
* You will be required to complete training for the Experts and Mentors programme. Please see details below.

## **Training for the role**

The Department for Education (DfE) has procured a training partner who will be responsible for providing training to experts, mentors and area leads, before you begin delivering support from September 2022.

The training will involve attending up to 4 days of face-to-face training, as set out by the training partner.

This training for the full roll-out began in May 2022. **Please note**, the training for this programme, if successful in your application, will be imminent. We have also added some additional training sessions in early September, to accommodate this recruitment process.

Details on dates/times of this training will be shared with you, if successful in your application.

## **Other details**

The department is providing funding of up to **£400** per day for this work as a Mentor, this includes any travel and subsistence costs incurred. Payment will be made to the school or setting you work in, in the form of a Section 14 grant. Terms and conditions for the grant can be found [online](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grant-funding-agreement-terms-and-conditions). Successful applicants who are invited to our training event will also be reimbursed for this.

Please indicate in your application form below if you would like to be considered for other roles.

Successful applicants must be available to attend training between June to September 2022 and start supporting settings from **September 2022.**

All applications will be assessed by the delivery partner appointed by DfE for this programme, Pen Green Research Base. All applications will be scored and matched to a location based on merit and will then consider location preferences.

Please note, as part of the application process, Pen Green Research Base will conduct basic due diligence checks on all applicants. This includes but is not limited to, for example, social media searches.

## **How to submit your application**

We invite you to submit a short expression of interest, using the form below, outlining your relevant skills and experience for this role.

Please submit your expression of interest form to the following mailbox, by **noon 1st July 2022.**

[eoi.EYRECOVERY@education.gov.uk](mailto:eoi.EYRECOVERY@education.gov.uk)

You can also contact this mailbox with any additional queries.

### **Expression of interest (EOI) form – Mentor**

**Please write your answers under the following headings:**

Name:

Email address: (if you use a shared email address for work purposes, you may wish to provide a personal email address)

School/Nursery/Setting name:

School/Nursery/Setting full address:

Postcode:

Local authority:

Manager/Headteacher/Owner name:

Manager/Headteacher/Owner email address:

I confirm I have my manager’s/setting owner’s/head teacher’s permission to take part in this programme: Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)

**Questions**

#### **Please outline your relevant experience of working in early years, including your current and past relevant roles.**

*You should look to include the following in your response:*

* Where you have supported others in the sector and where this helped others to improve, including supporting other leaders or settings
* Experience of using a coaching model of support (if applicable)
* Experience of providing both face-to-face and remote support to others, including the use of remote technology

(Please answer in between 300-500 words)

#### **The Experts and Mentors programme is about helping disadvantaged children, who have been most impacted by COVID-19. Please outline your understanding of the importance of child development.**

*You should look to include the following in your response:*

* + The areas where you have noticed gaps in children’s development, after the pandemic.
  + And in turn, what have you done, or what strategies have you put in place, to support disadvantaged children to bridge that gap.

(Please answer in between 300-500 words)

#### **Please outline what you believe to be the key changes in the reformed early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework.**

*You should look to include the following in your response:*

* The advantages/benefits of the reforms
* Detail on which parts of the reforms have been challenging to implement in your setting/in your local area (if applicable)
* Support you have provided to your staff to help improve their understanding of the reforms

(Please answer in between 300-500 words)

#### **Please list relevant qualifications for this role.**

4.1 Do you hold a Level 6 qualification in early years/child development? **(Essential)**

Yes / No – Please list subject

4.2 Do you hold additional relevant qualifications above Level 6, such as MA, MSc etc? **(Desirable)**

Yes / No – Please list subject

4.3 Do you hold teaching qualifications, such as Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) or Early Years Professional status (EYPS) etc? **(Desirable)**

Yes / No – Please list

4.4 Do you hold any leadership/coaching qualifications or have you completed any recent relevant CPD? **(Desirable)**

Please list

#### **Please list up to 5 local authority areas you are able to provide support to, in order of preference for matching purporses.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**I confirm, as a mentor undertaking a virtual role, I am happy to be flexible and support settings outside of the areas I have listed above, if needed.**

Yes / No

#### **Can you please confirm you can meet the minimum time requirements for your role?**

For all roles: Up to 4 days of training

Area Lead: 6 days per term

Expert: 6 days per term

Mentor: 6 hours of support, per early years settings, per term. Each mentor is expected to support 4 early years settings, per term. This equates to around 4 hours per fortnight, per term.

**I agree I can meet the minimum time requirement for the role I have applied for (mentor).**

Yes / No

**I can commit to more time than advertised and would be open to supporting more settings if needed.**

Yes / No - Provide detail

#### **Would you like to be considered for any other roles on the programme?**

Please state: ‘Expert and Mentor’, ‘or ‘Mentor only’

Please submit your expression of interest form to the following mailbox, by **noon 1st July 2022.**

[eoi.EYRECOVERY@education.gov.uk](mailto:eoi.EYRECOVERY@education.gov.uk)

You will be invited to a short video-call interview, and may also be contacted to discuss your capacity and deployment.

We will arrange training for successful applicants where you will have the opportunity to hear more about the programme.

If you have any further queries, please email the above mailbox.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Early Years Recovery Team

